

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:
a housing ~~extending from~~ having a proximal end [~~to~~] and a distal end and defining a [~~avity~~] plurality of cavities in a side wall thereof, the distal end of the housing including a cover having a plurality of movable tabs; and

a hub disposed for movement within the housing, the hub including a needle having a distal end and a plurality of movable projections,

wherein the hub is biased [~~between~~] from an extended position[~~, such that~~] in which the distal end of the needle is exposed and each of the movable projections is releasably disposed [~~with~~] within a corresponding one of the plurality of cavities [~~avity~~], [~~and~~] to a retracted position [~~whereby~~] in which the distal end of the needle is disposed within the housing, and wherein the movable tabs [~~being~~] are engageable with the movable projections to release the movable projections from the [~~avity~~] cavities to facilitate movement of the hub to the retracted position.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (canceled)

Claim 4 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the proximal end of the housing defines a groove on an inner surface thereof that is configured for fixed disposal of the movable projection[,]when the hub is in the retracted position.

Claim 5 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the housing is substantially rigid.

Claim 6 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the cover is separately formed and mounted to the distal end of the housing.

Claim 7 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 6, wherein the cover is mounted with the distal end of the housing such that a chamber is formed therebetween.

Claim 8 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the housing is monolithically formed.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the movable tabs extend[s] from the cover for pivotable movement relative thereto.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the movable projections pivotably extend[s] from the hub and ~~[is]~~ are biased radially outward.

Claim 11 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the hub is biased for movement within the housing via a spring supported between the hub and the distal end of the housing, and disposed about the needle.

Claim 12 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the distal end of the housing includes a rigid transverse wall that defines an opening for passage of the needle, the transverse wall further defining a lip disposed about the opening that is configured to capture the distal end of the needle, in the retracted position.

Claim 13 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 12, wherein the hub defines an angled distal surface that engages a biasing member disposed between the hub and the distal end of the housing such that, in the retracted position, the hub orients the needle out of axial alignment with the housing and into capture with the lip.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:
a housing ~~[extending from]~~ having a proximal end ~~[to]~~ and a distal end and defining a plurality of cavities in a side wall thereof, the distal end of the housing including a cover mounted thereto, the cover having a plurality of tabs pivotably extending therefrom; and
a hub disposed for relative slidable movement within the housing and including a needle having a distal end extending therefrom, the hub further including a plurality of projections moveable relative thereto and disposed adjacent a proximal portion thereof;

wherein the hub is biased for movement within the housing via a biasing member supported between the hub and the distal end of the housing, the hub being movable between an extended position, such that the distal end of the needle is exposed and the projections are each releasably disposed within a corresponding ~~[cavity]~~ one of the plurality of cavities, and a retracted position ~~[whereby]~~ wherein the distal end of the needle is disposed within the housing.

each of the tabs being engageable with a corresponding projection to release the projections from the cavities such that the biasing member forces the hub from the extended position to the retracted position whereby the projections are fixedly engaged with the proximal end of the housing.

Claim 15 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein the cover includes a wing extending therefrom for manipulation of the housing.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein the proximal end of the housing defines a groove circumferentially disposed about an inner surface thereof that is configured for fixed engagement with the projections when the hub is in the retracted position.

Claim 17 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein the biasing member is a coil spring disposed about the needle.

Claim 18 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein the distal end of the housing includes a rigid transverse wall that defines an opening for passage of the needle, the transverse wall further defining a lip disposed about the opening that is configured to capture the distal end of the needle, in the retracted position.

Claim 19 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 18, wherein the hub defines an angled distal surface that engages the biasing member such that, in the retracted position, the hub orients the needle out of axial alignment with the housing and into capture with the lip.

Claim 20 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein the cover is mounted with the distal end of the housing such that a fluid chamber is formed therebetween.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:
a housing [~~extending from~~] having a proximal end [~~to~~] and a distal end and defining a pair of cavities that are diametrically disposed in a side wall of the housing:
a cover mounted to the distal end of the housing and [~~forming a fluid chamber therewith~~],
the cover including a pair of diametrically disposed tabs pivotably extending therefrom and a pair of diametrically disposed wings extending therefrom;
a hub disposed for slidable movement within the housing and including a needle having a distal end extending therefrom, the hub further including a pair of diametrically disposed projections [~~moveable relative to the hub~~],

wherein the hub is biased for movement within the housing, via a coil spring supported between the hub and the distal end of the housing and disposed about the needle, [~~between~~] from an extended position[~~, such that~~] in which the distal end of the needle is exposed and the projections are each releasably disposed within a corresponding [~~cavity~~] one of the pair of cavities, [~~and~~] to a retracted position whereby the distal end of the needle is disposed within the housing, each of the tabs being engageable with a corresponding projection to release the corresponding projection from the cavities such that the coil spring forces the hub to the retracted

position [~~whereby the projections are fixedly disposed within a groove formed in the proximal end of the housing~~]; and

tubing having a first end [~~being~~] attached to a proximal end of the hub and in fluid communication with the needle[,] and a second end [~~of the tubing being~~] attached to a fluid administration apparatus and in fluid communication therewith.

Claim 22 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a housing [~~extending from~~] having a proximal end [~~to~~] and a distal end and defining a pair of cavities that are diametrically disposed in a side wall of the housing;

a hub disposed for slidable movement within the housing and including a needle having a distal end extending therefrom, the hub further including a pair of diametrically disposed projections moveable relative to the hub,

wherein the hub is biased for movement within the housing, via a biasing member supported between the hub and the distal end of the housing and disposed about the needle, [~~between~~] from an extended position[~~, such that~~] in which the distal end of the needle is exposed and the projections are each releasably disposed within a corresponding [~~cavity~~] one of the pair of cavities, and a retracted position [~~whereby~~] in which the distal end of the needle is disposed within the housing, each of the projections being engageable to release the projections from the cavities such that the biasing member forces the hub to the retracted position [~~whereby the projections are fixedly disposed within a groove formed in the proximal end of the housing~~]; and

tubing having a first end [~~being~~] attached to a proximal end of the hub and in fluid communication with the needle[,] and a second end [~~of the tubing being~~] attached to a fluid administration apparatus and in fluid communication therewith.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a housing [~~extending from~~] having a proximal end [~~to~~] and a distal end and defining a plurality of cavities in a side wall thereof, the distal end of the housing including a cover mounted thereto, the cover having a plurality of tabs pivotably extending therefrom and a pair of diametrically disposed wings extending therefrom, the cavities and the tabs being proximally disposed relative to the wings; and

a hub disposed for relative slidable movement within the housing and including a needle having a distal end extending therefrom, the hub further including a plurality of projections moveable relative thereto and disposed adjacent a proximal portion thereof;

wherein the hub is biased for movement within the housing, via a biasing member supported between the hub and the distal end of the housing, ~~[between]~~ from an extended position~~[-, such that]~~ in which the distal end of the needle is exposed and the projections are each releasably disposed within a corresponding ~~[cavity]~~ one of the plurality of cavities, and a retracted position ~~[whereby]~~ in which the distal end of the needle is disposed within the housing, each of the tabs being engageable, proximal to the wings, with a corresponding projection to release the projections from the cavities such that the biasing member forces the hub to the retracted position ~~[whereby the projections are fixedly engaged with the proximal end of the housing]~~.

Claim 24 (original): A safety shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the housing and the cover are monolithically formed.

Claim 25 (new): A safety shield apparatus as recited in Claim 21, wherein the distal end of the housing includes a transverse wall defining a first opening having a first diameter and the cover defines a second opening having a second diameter, the transverse wall and the cover defining a fluid chamber, wherein the first and second openings are positioned on opposite sides of the fluid chamber.